axillaria minuta: *pectoralia* ad marginem antico-externum sinuata: *abdominalia* magna, quadrata, ad marginem antico-externum rotundata: *femoralia* trapezoidea: *analia* rhombea, ad marginem testæ superioris ferè attinentia.

Testæ osseæ mensura.

	unc.	lin.
Longitudo dorsi	7	2
Latitudo ejusdem	4	5
Longitudo sterni	7	0
Altitudo	2	3

It is not easy to account for the obscurity which so long hung over this species, so common as it is in collections, and so frequently brought alive to this country. It appears that although Dumeril had affixed the present specific name to a specimen in the Paris Museum, it was in Schweigger's Prodromus that it was first described. So little known is this valuable paper, that Mr. Gray published the species as new in the first Number of his Spicilegia, under the name of *Testudo Bellii*.

This tortoise is more pleasing and elegant in its form and colours than most others. The regular arch of the shell, and the correct form and concentric furrowing of the plates, are not less remarkable than the pleasing contrast of the colours, and the perfect regularity of their distribution. The disk of each dorsal plate is yellow, becoming brownish or piceous at the areola, and the circumference a rich deep black. Each of the marginal plates is diagonally divided into yellow and black, the former occupying the larger portion. The sternum, during life, is yellow, clouded with a bright vermilion red, which disappears soon after death; and there are some blackish radiations on each of the sternal plates. In old age, the sulci become obliterated, the markings obscure, and the shell somewhat expanded.

The most remarkable peculiarity of this species however, and which distinguishes it from all others of the terrestrial form, consists in the gular plates being united into one, with a slightly raised median line; so that, strictly speaking, there is but a single gular plate. This is the only exception,

amongst the Testudinidæ or land tortoises, to the rule that the sternal plates are twelve; and Mr. Gray has considered this character as sufficiently important to constitute a distinct genus, to which he has given the appellation *Chersina;* a name already applied by Merrem, though with a different termination, to the genus *Testudo* as it now stands. I cannot see the propriety of separating an individual species from a genus, to the other species of which it is in every important respect closely allied, and assigning to it a distinct generic rank, merely on the ground of so slight a distinction as the union or separation of a pair of scuta. This multiplication of genera, which in such extensive classes as birds or insects may be necessary and useful, is, in the present case, alike uncalled for on the score of convenience, and unauthorized by any claims of natural arrangement.

Mr. Gray suggests that "*T. pusilla* Linn. and Daud., and *consequently T. miniata* Lacép., appears to belong to this species, which is sometimes reddish beneath when alive." This is an amusing allusion, as there is no such name as *miniata* applied to a tortoise in Lacépède or in any other writer that I am acquainted with; but Mr. Gray probably means the "Vermillon" of that author. Had he read Lacépède's own description, he would have seen that it agrees fully and solely with *T. areolata,* and that the name "Vermillon" was given to it on account of the red colour of the horny plate over the nose. "Sur le sommet de la tête," says the author, "dont on a comparé la forme à celle d'un perroquet, s'élève une protubérance d'une couleur de vermillon melangé de jaune. C'est de ce dernier caractère que nous avons tiré le nom que nous lui donnons."

I have received many specimens of this tortoise alive from Madagascar and from the Cape of Good Hope, and have kept one for more than a year, feeding in the summer upon lettuce and other vegetables, and hibernating in a stable under straw.